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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION; IRAN; IRAQ; CUBA; 04/11/07; BUENOS AIRES

1. SUMMARY STATEMENT

International stories today include the alleged Iranian energy crisis that could justify its nuclear program; the upcoming FM ministerial on the Iraq issue, which will take place in Egypt; and the US embargo on Cuba, which is questioned not only in Cuba but also in the US, where the majority of the public opposes it.

Daily-of-record "La Nacion" carries an op-ed piece by Admiral James G. Stavridis, head of the US South Command.

2. OPINION PIECES AND EDITORIALS

- "(Dead end) ally"

Marcelo Cantelmi, international editor of leading "Clarín," penned (04/11) "The issue just looks like a (dead end) ally. Ali Lariyani, secretary to the Iranian Security Council and the one who solved the

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crisis posed by the UK Marines, warned European leaders and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) that the end of the Iranian nuclear program should be neither a condition nor the outcome of negotiations.

"According to Iranian authorities, their program does not include the bomb, but, given the circumstances, most believe that this will be an inevitable consequence in the medium term. The concrete thing for now is that, in spite of the fact that Iran has abundant amounts of oil, its energy structure is broken and the nuclear program is a handy option to solve a crisis that could well lead to social upheavals.

"As one can see, it is not only pride we are talking about in this thorny issue."

- "Iraq and the hell of civil war"

Daily-of-record "La Nacion" editorializes (04/11) "On May 1, 2003, US President George W. Bush triumphantly announced to his people and the nations making up the military coalition that invaded Iraq - 'Accomplished mission'...

"Four years later, Iraq is merged in a tough sectarian civil war...

"The US seems bogged down in a conflict that not only has impaired its image in the eyes of the world but which seems to have a remote and unpredictable end. The shadow of what happened some decades ago in Lebanon is starting to grow and raises concern in all those who are involved in this mess. George W. Bush's declared objective of substituting a democracy for Saddam Hussein's tyranny is now unrealistic.

"As a consequence of the reshuffling of power occurred due to the downfall of Saddam Hussein's regime, Iran has become a new regional power and it openly defies the international community with its nuclear program, which contributes even further to worsening this complex reality.

"... The Iraqi FM has just surprisingly announced that the second meeting for multilateral peace talks will take place in Egypt instead of Turkey.

"... Four years away from the occupation of Baghdad by the US-led military coalition, the scenario has considerably worsened and the worst predictions of those who opposed it seem to have been accomplished.

"The situation in Iraq will be the prevailing issue in the round of negotiations in Egypt... The road to dialogue seems to be the proper option to put an end to the climate of violence that has taken hold of Iraq and, to some extent, of the entire region. The world should not miss, then, a crucial opportunity to promote peace."

- "The (US) embargo on Cuba, anachronistic"

An editorial in leading "Clarín" reads (04/11) "Cuba has suffered a US economic embargo for 45 years, which makes it live under severe limitations and outside of major trade flows...

"For the first time in history, most people in the US believe that sanctions should be lifted or softened, which could open prospects of reestablishing major trade.

"Reasons for this change are pragmatic rather than ideological. Communism has stopped being the main problem for US foreign policy and doubts about Castro's fragile health condition raise concerns and expectations. The problem is how to get out of the prolonged siege on Cuba without setting off a sudden imbalance in its economy, a point on which both Washington and Havana certainly agree."

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